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A SYNTACTICAL NOTE ON *sich nennen*

To the Editors of *Mod. Lang. Notes*.

SIRS:—The German construction of *sich nennen* followed by the nominative case has sometimes been considered incorrect. It may therefore serve a purpose to show its comparative frequency.

In the Schlegel-Tieck translation of Shakespeare we find this construction frequently; cf. *Der Widerspenstigen Zähmung, Einleitung*:

Seid ihr mein Weib und nennt mich nicht mein Mann?

and Act 4, Sc. 5:

Das trifft sich gut, für deinen Sohn am besten;
Und nach Verwandtschaft nun wie nach dem Alter
Mag ich dich jetzt geliebter Vater nennen.

Other references are given in various dictionaries (Grimm, Sanders), and in some Grammars (Curme, for example); in short, the construction is sanctioned by good authority.

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CONCERNING A PASSAGE IN GOETHE'S

Hermann und Dorothea

To the Editors of *Mod. Lang. Notes*.

SIRS:—The fine opening passage to the eighth canto of Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea* seems to have been misunderstood not only by one of our American editors of the epic but also by Ellen Frothingham in her well-known translation of the poem, the version which is included in the Harvard Classics.

Goethe's hero and heroine, as we read, walk together

"entgegen der sinkenden Sonne,
Die in Wolken sich tief, gewitterdrohend verhüllte,
Aus dem Schleier, bald hier bald dort, mit glühenden
Blicken
Strahlend über das Feld die ahnungsvolle Beleuchtung."

The point at issue is the meaning of *Blicken*; this word surely does not here signify "intermittent flashes of lightning." What the poet had in mind is this: the setting sun, through rifts in the gathering storm clouds, shoots out over the darkening landscape its last slanting rays, thus producing the ominous light or illumination (*ahnungsvolle Beleuchtung*). A grammatical analysis of the passage, to say nothing of further considerations, forbids any other interpretation; moreover, a parallel use of *Blick* is to be found in the poet's *Tasso*, his *Wilhelm Meister* and his *Wahlverwandtschaften*. And to the writer's knowledge over half a dozen other authors from Hartmann von Aue down to Gottfried Keller employ the word in connection with the sun.

In conclusion it may be interesting to note that the following passages in Milton and Thomson present a picture which reminds one, in a general way, of the natural phenomenon depicted in the Goethean lines above. In Milton we read—

"As, when from mountain-tops the dusky clouds
Ascending, while the North-wind sleeps, o'erspread
Heaven's cheerful face, the louring element
Scowls o'er the darkened landskip snow or shower,
If chance the radiant sun, with farewell sweet,
Extend his evening beam."

(*Paradise Lost*.)

And in his *Seasons* Thomson tells us how

"the downward sun
Looks out, effulgent, from amid the flush
Of broken clouds."

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BRIEF MENTION

The English Language, by Logan Pearsall Smith (London, Williams and Norgate; New York, Henry Holt & Co., 1912). Here are nine well composed chapters introducing the general reader to some of the most important aspects of the subject. The writer is well equipped in knowledge and treats his topics with philosophic insight. His style is clear, and his sincerity of purpose restrains him from obscuring doctrine with a pedantic display of